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MINEHEAD URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL.

MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH'S REPORT FOR 1955.

The Registrar General's figure for the population of the town is 7,440, the figure for 1954 being 7,410; for 1953, 7,333; and for 1952, 7,237. It is probable that during the summer holidays this figure is more than doubled. The seasonal increase usually commences in June and continues until September. There are also minor variations at Easter and Christmas. The large majority of the hotels, boarding houses and apartments close down for the winter months. The health of the community during the year was satisfactory.

Vital Statistics.

	Total	M.	F.
Live Births - Legitimate	61	37	24
Illegitimate	3	1	2

Birth Rate per 1,000 of the estimated resident population 8.6.

	Total	M.	F.
Deaths	134	66	68

Death Rate per 1,000 of the estimated resident population 18.01.

Death Rate of Infants under one year of age.

All Infants per 1,000 live births :- 31.25

Water Supply.

This has been satisfactory throughout the year. The quantity was at all times sufficient to meet the demand. The main supply from Nutscale Reservoir with subsidiary supplies from Broadwood, Longwood, Longcombe and Periton caused no anxiety at any time. The use of the Broadwood supply is being gradually discontinued although at all times available in case of temporary shortage. The quality of the water supply to the town is satisfactory; samples of raw water were periodically sent for analysis. All 3 samples of treated water sent for analysis were in all respects satisfactory. The chemical analysis of the water was satisfactory. No action was at any time called for respecting contamination and none was taken.

There were complaints from the public regarding the occasional discolouration of the water. Examination of samples of the discoloured water showed that the colouring matter was due to the presence of iron caused by the action of the acid water on the iron pipes. The flushing of the dead ends of the water carriage system caused the occasional and irregular appearance of the colouring matter in the water. It was found to be innocuous.

Certain structural alterations have taken place at Nutscale. The dam has been completed and a new installation of an automatic cylinder change-over panel for chlorinator has been completed and is working satisfactorily.

On account of casual infection of the catchment areas, particularly during the summer months coincident with the large increase in the visiting population at that time, it has been deemed advisable that the whole of the water supply should be chlorinated before going into distribution. This has now been carried out.

Extensions or Improvements of Supplies during year.

Extension of 6" main in Bampton Street.
" " 4" main in Paganel Road.
" " 4" main in Whitworth Road.

Future Proposals.

New 6" main in Summerland Road, Summerland Avenue and
Glenmore Road.

Diversion of the Broadwood supply direct into Staunton
Reservoir.

Swimming Pools.

There is one swimming pool situated on the sea front which is privately owned. This pool is filled with sea water which undergoes chlorination before being admitted to the pool. The filtration and chlorination plant are under skilled management and the engineer is on duty the whole of the time the bath is in operation. Frequent testing indicates that the water carried the necessary amount of residual chlorine to ensure a safe bathing water. Samples submitted from time to time were all found to be satisfactory.

The efficiency of the management of the Swimming Pool, and the condition of the bathing water, have at no time given rise to any anxiety.

Sewage Disposal.

The whole of the Urban District is served by a sewage disposal system.

As stated in my last report the sewage disposal of the town has occupied the attention of the Council during the year. Expert advice has been taken as to the best method of dealing with this matter and the report and its financial commitments will be dealt with during the coming year.

Practically all the houses in the district are served by water-closet accommodation, only 16 are not so served. Of these, 12 are pail closets and 4 earth closets.

The public cleansing is done by direct labour. During the season there is a considerable increase in the quantity of litter created by the visitors to the town and sea front. Complaints on this matter have been received from time to time. The allocation of more personnel to this branch of public cleansing should have the desired effect of abating the nuisance. I am assured that constant supervision is being maintained. The controlled tip which is situated beyond Quay West is in good condition and the disinfecting plant is satisfactory.

Foods.

No outbreaks of food poisoning have been reported during the year.

Meat and other Foods.

Meat is prepared for human food at the Minehead Abattoir from where it is distributed throughout the districts of Minehead, Watchet and Williton. So far as is practical all animals are inspected before slaughter and all carcasses and offal are inspected in accordance with instructions laid down in Memo. 62 Foods, and appropriate action taken where required.

All places where food is prepared, etc., including the Abattoir, shops, stalls and vehicles, are inspected from time to time and action taken as required. Generally the cleanliness of these establishments and vehicles is satisfactory.

MEAT INSPECTION 1955.

CARCASSES INSPECTED AND CONDEMNED.

Carcases and Offal inspected and condemned in whole or in part during year :-

	Cattle excluding Cows	Cows	Calves	Sheep & Lambs	Pigs	Horses
Number killed (if known)	617	133	213	4045	2431	-
Number inspected	617	133	213	4045	2431	-
<u>All diseases except Tuberculosis and Cysticerci</u>						
Whole carcasses condemned	-	2	1	6	1	-
Carcasses of which some part or organ was condemned	109	79	1	13	124	-
Percentage of the number inspected affected with disease other than tubercu- losis and cysticerci	17.6	60	0.9	0.4	5	-
<u>Tuberculosis only.</u>						
Whole carcasses condemned	-	3	-	-	1	-
Carcasses of which some part or organ was condemned	7	3	-	-	115	-
Percentage of the number inspected affected with tuberculosis	1.1	4.5	-	-	4.8	-
<u>Cysticercosis.</u>						
Carcasses of which some part or organ was condemned	-	-	-	-	-	-
Carcasses submitted to treatment by refrigeration	1	-	-	-	-	-
Generalised and totally condemned	-	-	-	-	-	-
Weight of meat condemned (in lbs.) for:-	ALL ANIMALS					
(a) Tuberculosis	3231					
(b) Cysticercosis	-					
(c) Other	4089					
Total (in lbs.) condemned	7320					

Milk.

The milk supply during the year was satisfactorily maintained. Samples taken from time to time that did not come up to the required standard were investigated and the cause ascertained and remedied.

- (a) The total number of Registered Distributors was 4.
- (b) The total number of Registered Dairy Premises was 1.
- (c) The number of supplementary licences issued to distributors whose dairy is outside this area was Nil.

Manufacture of Ice Cream.

The regulations governing this manufacture and the requirements implicit in them have tended to restrict the preparation of ice cream to the large wholesale houses. The distributors find it more profitable to purchase their ice cream in bulk.

Housing.

The total number of houses is 2,487. 42 houses were erected during the year; 16 by the Local Authority and 26 by private enterprise. 26 houses were in course of erection at the close of the year.

67 houses are reported as unsatisfactory in that two families are occupying the same house.

The total number of applicants for Council Houses at the end of the year was approximately 197.

The number of Post War houses erected up to the 31st December 1955 was :-

By Local Authority	-	218
By Private Enterprise	-	97

Improvement Grants made under the Housing Act, 1949-1954.

Number of applications and houses dealt with by Local Authority:-

	Received		Approved		Rejected	
	Aps.	No. of houses	Aps.	No. of houses	Aps.	No. of houses
31.7.49 - 31.12.54	-	-	-	-	-	-
During year	8	9	7	7	1	2
Totals	8	9	7	7	1	2

Factories Acts, 1937 and 1948.

Inspections for purposes of provisions as to health (including inspections made by Sanitary Inspector).

Premises	Number on Register	Number of		
		Inspections	Written Notices	Occupiers Prosecuted
(i) Factories in which Sections 1,2,3,4 & 6 are to be enforced by Local Authorities	12	5	-	-
(ii) Factories not included in (i) in which Section 7 is enforced by the Local Authority	61	49	-	-
(iii) Other premises in which Section 7 is enforced by the Local Authority (excluding out-workers' premises)	-	-	-	-
TOTAL	73	54	-	-

Cases in which defects were found :- NIL.

Number of out-workers in August list required by Section 110(1)(c)
Wearing apparel 5.

Infectious Diseases.

An epidemic of measles occurred at the beginning of April which continued until the end of June affecting the town and the surrounding country. 237 cases were notified in the Minehead area. The bulk of the cases were of a mild type. There were no deaths.

Cases requiring institutional isolation are sent to Taunton Isolation Hospital.

Disinfection of premises after infectious disease is carried out by the Local Authority, also after cases of an unhygienic or unpleasant nature on receipt of a written request from the General Practitioner in attendance.

Tuberculosis.

There were 4 new cases of tuberculosis notified. There were no deaths.

Hospital.

The Minehead and West Somerset Hospital is entirely administered by the Bridgwater, Minehead and Butleigh Management Committee.

Local representation in the management of the Hospital exists in the House Committee of the Hospital, on which the town is represented. This Committee is responsible for the day to day supervision of the Institution and is empowered to make recommendations and representations to the Committee of Management. The Committee of Management is represented on the Committee by three of its members.

Ambulance Services.

During the year under review the ambulance services vested by the Ministry in the County Council have been carried out by the St. John Ambulance Brigade to the entire satisfaction of the community. Under the arrangement with the County Council the cost of the running and maintenance of the ambulances is the concern of the County Council. Three ambulances and two sitting case cars are based on the St. John Ambulance Headquarters and six full-time ambulance drivers are maintained. The remainder of the Service, which includes all night work, is carried out by the local ambulance and nursing divisions. This part of the Service is voluntary and maintained with the financial support of the general public.

Clinics.

Clinics, with the exception of Infant Welfare, are now held at the Minehead and West Somerset Hospital.

Vital Statistics.

An analysis of the vital statistics shows that the total deaths registered were 134; in 1954 the number was 100.

The total live births were 64 compared with 80 the previous year.

With regard to the deaths occurring in age groups, 32 occurred between 60 and 70; 84 occurred over the age of 70, and of these 43 occurred between 70 and 80; 34 between 80 and 90, and 7 at 90 or over. It would seem that of the 134 deaths only 50 failed to reach the three score years and ten.

Consideration of the causes of deaths shows a slight variation from the usual. 72 deaths out of the 134 resulted from diseases of the circulatory system as against 48 of the previous year. Of these, lesions of the coronary vessels of the heart number 24, and vascular lesions of the nervous system 21. The acute specific fevers accounted for 2, these being due to influenza. The total number of deaths from malignant disease was 23. There were 7 deaths due to respiratory disease.

In this analysis it appears that more than half the total deaths were due to diseases of the circulatory system. This increase may have some significance which will become manifest in the light of further statistics.

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As will be seen from consideration of the various items making up this report the health of the town remains satisfactory.

The erection of new houses has continued at a slightly accelerated rate; 42 houses being erected during the year, 16 by the Local Authority and 26 by Private Enterprise.

The water supply has proved adequate for all the needs of the community. The storage has been sufficient and since the inception of Nutscale Reservoir has not shown any sign of being otherwise.

Of the various difficulties inherent in a town with such a large seasonal fluctuation in the population the water supply is satisfactory in quantity and quality. The equalisation of the water pressure in the various parts of the town is receiving your Surveyor's attention. The menace of litter in the town and on the sea front is kept under observation and is dealt with as far as the personal habits of the visiting public will allow.

I should like to close with an appreciation of the Council's co-operation and patience in dealing with the matters that I have brought before them, and to my colleagues in its service my thanks for their courtesy and help in all those matters concerning the public health.

W. BAIN,

M.B., B.S., Lond.,

Medical Officer of Health.

July 1956.

